THE

HOME FRIEND;

A WEEKLY MISCELLANY OF AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION.

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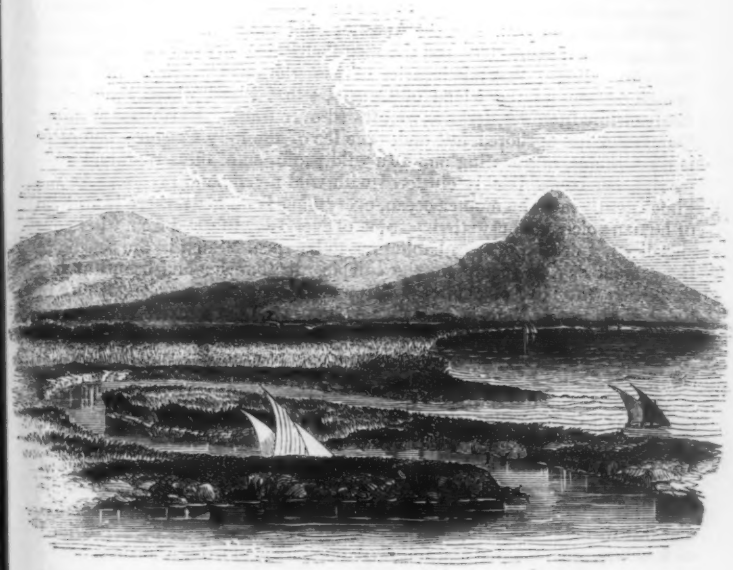
SEA-COAST AND SHORES OF CILICIA, &c. (*continued*).



SUEDIA, THE ANCIENT SELEUCIA.

HIGH above the pleasant blue waves of the surrounding ocean, in stately but solitary majesty, rises the lofty and sharp-peaked Cassius. Not a speck in the clear horizon interferes with the navigator's survey of the west. There lies the peaceful Mediterranean, like one huge mirror left there expressly to reflect the transcendent brilliancy of the morning sun. To our left are the pleasant hills and dales and glens, and rocky promontories, so green with Spring's verdure, so redolent of nature's bounty, so variegated in form and shape; and, when all combined, constituting so exquisite a master-touch of skill, so perfect a picture of what God's loving bounty to man has been when

He gave him in His infinite mercy such lovely spots, such Edens to dwell in upon earth. There is something exhilarating in the air we breathe, something congenial in the prospect around us, which invites the soul to song and thankfulness. No wonder that poetry was the language of the land, and that the inspired Psalmist, after gazing on such-like scenery, should tune his lute and sing songs of praises to that Great Beneficent Being who first created them :—

> "How various, Lord, thy works are found
> For which thy wisdom we adore!
> The earth is with thy treasures crown'd
> Till Nature's hand can grasp no more;
> But still the vast unfathom'd main
> Of wonders a new scene supplies." (Psalm civ. 24, 25.)

And now, as our proud vessel speedily nears the shores, urged over the tranquil seas by the light breath of the early morning breeze, fresh scenes invite the attention. Yonder before us, skimming over the waters like a storm bird, is a little Arab feleucah. In just such another boat, in all probability, eighteen hundred years ago, the Apostles Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii. 40) left yonder self-same river, and the then flourishing city of Seleucia, bearers of joyful tidings; first missionaries of the glorious Christian faith to the benighted sons of the island of Cyprus,—that island whose shores were dimly visible from our decks as we crossed over from Tarshish last evening. Our vessel has anchored just under the lee of the lofty Cassius; before us is the Orontes, meandering amidst a wild profusion of olive trees and mulberries, her banks thickly clustered with wild myrtle and thyme. As she glides gently into the mother ocean, everything is hushed; there is no hum of human voices, no busy stirring scene of every-day life, and from where our ship lies not even a human habitation to be seen. Such is the Suedia of the present day, as seen from the shipping in the wide and beautiful bay formed by the Gulf of Antioch. How different from the splendid city of Seleucia in Paul's time, of which now hardly a vestige exists!—a city in whose extensive and well-secured harbour fleets of richly-laden vessels annually sought refuge from the fierce winter storms that raged along the coast.

We landed in the ship's boat, which was safely guided over the rather dangerous bar at the mouth of the river by an experienced native pilot. After several bends and windings, all which are rapidly passed, aided by the smoothness of the Orontes and a small lugger sail, we eventually reached the custom-house quay. A miserable collection of mud hovels were built upon this spot, and we felt sadly disappointed, being under the impression that this was all that remained of the city of Seleucia. Being provided with horses, we mounted and followed our guide, skirting the deep banks of the beautiful Orontes. After half a mile's riding we were agreeably surprised on arriving at a slight eminence by catching a glimpse of the veritable Suedia, close to our feet; and far as the eye could stretch was one interminable range of richly-cultivated meadows and fields, through which the river flowed in a very serpentine course. Beyond these meadows was a dense forest of mulberry trees and fruit orchards; the variegated hue of their green foliage being admirably set off by the graceful dark-leaved poplar, and interspersed with several tall hillocks, up whose sides grew wild myrtles and blackberry bushes, and whose summits were crowned by a cluster of stately olive trees. Passing over the meadows, we entered upon the picturesque lanes which intersected the plantations in all direc-

tions: there was no highway, so that we were utterly at the caprice of our guide. Following this man's horse, we rapidly passed plantation after plantation; they were all secured by thickly-set hedges, amongst whose branches wild vines and sweet-scented creepers were twined in the wildest confusion, and the whole air was scented with odours of delicious flowers. Ever and anon, as we passed the rudely-constructed gateway which formed an entrance to the orchards or mulberry gardens, we caught sight of the humble but cleanly dwellings of the peasants belonging to each proprietor. These houses were all long and low, and mostly covered in with tiles; opposite to the entrance doors were neatly-swept spaces, where groups of men, women, and children were seated on the ground, each following his or her occupation; some women were plying the distaff, some were busily occupied in sifting wheat, whilst some again were knitting stockings for the next winter's wear. The men and boys were mostly at work gathering the leaves from large piles of branches lopped freshly from the mulberry trees; these were preparing the morning's meal for the stock of silkworms under their several charges, and they had need be attentive to their welfare, for from these silkworms mainly do the natives derive their support. How wonderful is God's mercy, to have created this active little worm, from whose labours thousands derive support, hundred of thousands comfortable and comely clothing! These pleasant family groups were usually seated under the shade of some lofty black mulberry trees, the leaf of which is not serviceable for the use of the silkworms, but they yield them delicious fruit and a pleasant shade; and in autumn, when the leaves fall, these are carefully collected, and stored up to feed the goats with in the winter season.

All the natives appeared to be healthy, for the climate is reckoned the finest in the world; and they all seemed happy and contented. Under the large apricot trees that were planted at the backs of the native huts, cocks and hens were congregated, busily picking up such fruit as was blown down by the passing gusts of wind; and in this occupation they were uninterrupted, because the morning's supply of fruit had already been collected and disposed of, and there was abundant supply to meet the wants of both the men and the birds. Sometimes an angry-looking cur would rush out from behind the hedge, and annoyingly snap at the heels of our horses; but these noble animals treated such invaders with superlative contempt, and the dogs were speedily called off by the natives, who were in every sense civil and obliging. As we progressed, we passed a knot of young men and women congregated round one of their number, who was reading to them from a book. This was a sight new to us in the East; and as the auditors, from their exclamations and gestures, seemed evidently surprised and deeply interested, we were determined to dismount and inquire into the cause. On fulfilling our intentions, we were gratified and surprised to discover that the young reader was occupied with that beautiful parable in Scripture of the "vineyard-planter who had let his vineyard to husbandmen." (Luke xx. 9.) The text he read from was Arabic; the subject well suited to the understanding of this simple people, and we blessed God to find that what Paul had sown, nearly two thousand years since, was still nourished, though a tender plant, in the understanding of these Syrians.*

* This practice of reading to each other we afterwards found to be a common practice in both Suedia and Antioch, but particularly in the former spot, where only, on an average, one out of a hundred could read; and such a one's talents were often put into requisition by his more ignorant neigh-

After we had conversed with these young people for a short time, we expressed a desire to be shown over one of the *Khoks*, or mud buildings, set apart expressly for the rearing of the silkworm: they readily complied with our request, though a prejudice exists amongst the more ignorant that not many strangers be admitted. We were shown into a long high building, built of sun-dried bricks, made impervious to the rain by thickly-thatched coverings—at the same time that the air was freely admitted through large windows roughly trellised in with thorns and myrtle twigs. The length of this room was about fifty feet, and its breadth perhaps thirty; in the centre and on the two sides were a number of matwork shelves, which reached up to the top of the khok; between each shelf a space of two feet intervened, and on these shelves, as thick and busy as possible, were the silkworms of the proprietor—hundreds of thousands of these creatures, all occupied in eating the leaves which had been freshly supplied, and the singular noise occasioned by the process of mastication resembled the incessant clipping of a pair of scissors. It was marvellous to see with what celerity they denuded a leaf of its foliage, leaving an anatomized skeleton, in which every little fibre had been carefully preserved. The manure of these creatures, and what was left of leaves, &c., was carefully swept into a corner, and there heaped up to serve as fodder for the oxen in winter. Nothing was without its intrinsic use and value. Well might Paul exclaim, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33.) After partaking of some refreshment, chiefly consisting of delicious fruits, both fresh and dry, we mounted our nags, and were conducted, after an hour's ride, to a village called Moghair, built on the actual site of ancient Seleucia. Judging from the aspect here, Seleucia must have occupied the most charming position imaginable. We were in one of a long narrow range of gardens of delicious fruit-trees: on one side of us the sea beat fiercely against the ruined breakwater of centuries past; on the other, steep mountains, laid out like a giant flight of steps—one garden on the top of the other. Crowning all this, once stood the city of Seleucia, hundreds of foundations being still visible, besides ruins of the city walls; and on one side of the hills, what is now a vast swamp, was, in the time that the Seleucidæ flourished, a celebrated dockyard for shipping. Some parts are still in *statu quo;* and the opinion is that with very small expense the place might be repaired. The most wonderful work of human enterprise and perseverance is the tunnel aqueduct on this spot, which passes under the hills for several miles, and was doubtless originally intended for what it now serves, viz., as a channel to carry off the heavy rains and snow which fall during the winter on the neighbouring mountain-tops, and which, but for this channel, would undoubtedly inundate the plains on either side, creating much devastation amongst the Armenian peasantry.

The population of Suedia is estimated at about 7,000 souls, of whom half are Christians of the Greek church. No two houses of the whole village are built within two hundred yards of each other. The book of Maccabeus is supposed to have been written in Seleucia, where Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius Nicanor, lived, when her husband was a prisoner in Persia.

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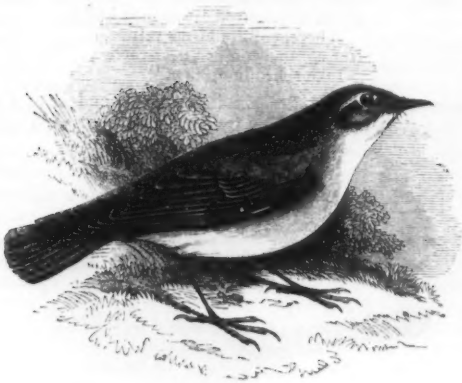
bours. The Greek priests at Suedia were a simple-minded, devout, but ignorant people; and it is much to be lamented that both in this place and at Antioch we have no missionary—one who might combine the medical with the clerical.



Wood Warbler.

The Wood Wren,* or Wood Warbler, or Green Wren (*Sylvia sylvicola*,) is the Willie Muftis of the Scotch peasant. It is a larger bird than either the chiff-chaff or the willow wren, but so similar, that until recently the three species have not been clearly distinguished from each other. Its notes are not so sweet as those of the last-named bird, but are more like the chirpings of the merry grasshopper. First, the strain commences with the sounds of "twee, twee, twee," oft repeated, and sounded very long; then follow the same sounds, uttered with great rapidity, and accompanied by a vibration of its wings. The song is usually sung from the summit of some old oak or beech; for it is in old woods, where the trees are thick and high, that this bird chiefly delights to dwell. It arrives in England at about the end of April, and leaves us in September; and it may be heard singing its shrill song almost all the summer, sometimes uttering it on the wing. Unlike most of our singing birds, it does not moult in autumn, but remains in its old plumage, and migrates without resigning its plumes.

This bird is very skilful in catching insects, either while on the wing, or when searching for them diligently in the crevices of the bark, or among the foliage of trees. It conceals its domed nest so cleverly, as that only an experienced bird-nester will find it out; but it may be distinguished from the very similar nests of the allied species, by the absence of feathers on the inside, it being invariably lined with fine grass and hair. Wordsworth's verses well describe it:—

"So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim;
That to the kind, by special grace,
Their instinct surely came.

* The Wood Wren may be distinguished from the Willow Wren by having the upper parts of a brighter green, the eye-streak, the throat, breast, and flanks, clear yellow; and the belly pure white.

"And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The Hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.
"Oft in sequester'd lanes they build,
Where, till the bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn."

The eggs of this bird are six in number, and have a white ground, which is, however, almost hidden by numerous spots and speckles of dark purplish-red or ash colour.

DARTFORD WARBLER.

The rare Dartford Warbler* (*Melizophilus Dartfordiensis*) sings as early as the month of February, and for its sweet, though hurried song, deserves mention among our singing birds. It is somewhat weak, but very pleasing. This bird is often called the furze wren, because it is among the spring boughs and golden blooms of that plant that it sings and builds. It is a very shy bird, and when the voice or footfall gives token of an approaching rambler over the downs, it retreats before him, passing from bush to bush with wonderful alacrity and skill, so that it makes an almost certain escape. It hides its nest, too, in the very thickest part of the bush, concealing it so well that few could find its tiny eggs of white hue, spotted at the larger end with grey and yellowish brown.

This bird frequents open bushy heaths and commons, and sings its song while quivering over the furze or broom; or it darts along on eager wing to catch the insects which have come thither to sip the honey from the fragrant flowers. Here, too, it gathers the dried grasses or the long stalks of goosegrass, of which it fabricates its nest, entwining them with young and tender branches of the furze, and adding to the fabric a clump of wool which has probably been torn from the coat of some sheep which came too

* The Dartford Warbler is about five inches in length. Upper plumage generally greyish-black, approaching to brown on the wings and tail; throat, breast, and sides chestnut, speckled with white on the chin; belly white; beak black, with pale edges; feet pale brown.

near to the prickly branches to find its meal. The whole length of the bird is rather more than five inches. In Provence, where it has been observed to frequent cabbage gardens, it is called *Pitte-chou* or *Pitt-chou*. Its English name was given because it was first remarked at Bexley Heath, near Dartford, in Kent, in the year 1733.

A writer in Loudon's Magazine of Natural History, well known to the readers of that work by his valuable contributions under the name of Rusticus of Godalming, says that this bird is very common in his neighbourhood, though almost unknown in other districts. His characteristic description of the bird is too good to be omitted. "If," says this writer, "you have ever watched a common wren (a kitty wren we call her), you must have observed that she cocked her tail bolt upright, strained her little beak at right angles, and her throat in the same fashion, to make the most of her fizgig of a song, and kept jumping and jerking and frisking about, for all the world as though she was worked by steam; well, that's the precise character of the Dartford warbler, or, as we call it, the furze wren. When the leaves are off the trees, and the chill winter winds have driven the summer birds to the olive-gardens of Spain, or across the Straits, the furze wren is in the height of his enjoyment. I have seen them by dozens skipping about the furze, lighting for a moment upon the very point of the sprigs, and instantly diving out of sight again, singing out their angry impatient ditty for ever the same. Perched on the outside of a good tall nag, and riding quietly along the outside, while the fox and hounds have been drawing the furze fields, I have seen the tops of the furze quite alive with these birds. They are, however, very hard to shoot; darting down directly they see the flash or hear the cap crack, I do not know which. I have seen excellent shots miss them, while rabbit-shooting with beagles. They prefer those places where the furze is very thick, high, and difficult to get in."

This bird has been found in Surrey, Devonshire, Cornwall, and Kent, and is believed to remain with us throughout the year. Its food consists of various insects.

Smaller than any other bird whose song gives music to our spring woods, is the delicate Gold-crest,* or Gold-crested Wren, or Marigold Finch, as it is sometimes termed (*Regulus auricapillus*). Its length is about three inches and a half, and its weight no more than seventy-five or eighty grains. It is called also kinglet; and its Latin name *Regulus*, signifying also a little king, was evidently bestowed in consequence of the soft silky feathers of its head, which are orange-coloured in the centre, shading off, on the sides, to a delicate yellow tint. A stripe of black runs along each side of the crest, and contrasts beautifully with the gayer hue. The beauty, both of colour and form, of this little bird is extreme, and its movements are most agile and graceful, no bird being more active than this. Now the gold-crests whisk through the dark branches of the fir-trees, like so many sylphs; now they hang hovering over a flower, singing all the while their melodious notes; and again they may be seen clinging, indifferently, in all positions, to the boughs, sometimes with their feet upwards. Being so small as that a leaf may cover them, they are often hidden by the verdant screen of summer; though when the wind is sighing through the bare branches of

* The Gold-crest is three inches and a half in length. Upper parts yellowish-olive; wing blackish, crossed by two narrow bands of white, and a broad interrupted one of black; crown-feathers bright yellow tipped with orange, the crown bordered with black; under parts yellowish-grey; beak black; feet brown.

winter, they may be seen gathering in small companies, looking diligently into the crevices of the bark, or betaking themselves to the greener fir-trees for a shelter, most closely inspecting every twig for the insects which swarm on the trunk and among the foliage of the dark yew-tree, or the towering pine. From their being so easily secreted among the leaves, some writers have thought the gold-crests less abundant in our island than they are now known to be. They appear to be very general in the northern parts of Britain, haunting especially the somewhat moist woods where the beech and fir overtop the growth of brambles and other underwood at their base, nothing seeming to delight them so well as the sombre foliage of the cedar, the yew, and the pine.

GOLD-CREST.

It seems wonderful that so delicate a bird can brave the severity of our winters, and it can only be by means of its incessant activity that it can do so. The usual number of gold-crests is greatly increased in autumn by the arrival of others which come to pass the winter here; and it appears highly probable that, in some seasons, some of our gold-crests migrate into other lands. Though when in our woods they scarcely make a longer flight than from tree to tree, these little creatures can brave the winds of ocean, sometimes settling on the tackle of the ships which are sailing across the waters, and being taken up in great exhaustion. Mr. Selby saw thousands of kinglets arrive on the sea-shore and sand-banks of Northumberland, after a very severe gale, in October 1822. The poor little birds were so fatigued, either by the length of their voyage, or by an unfavourable turn of the wind, that they were unable to rise from the ground, and large numbers were consequently taken and destroyed. In another case mentioned by the same ornithologist, in January 1823, a few days previous to a long-continued snow-storm in Scotland and the North of England, all the gold-crests, natives as well as strangers, had entirely disappeared from those districts, nor did any return, on the approach of spring, to the haunts which they were wont to enliven by their presence.

Though this bird is enabled, by means of perpetual exercise, to guard against the extreme cold, and though it finds a way to secrete itself in places where frost cannot reach it, yet it seems likely that many gold-

crests perish in our most severe winters, notwithstanding their bustling activity and resources. The Hon. and Rev. W. Herbert says, that in confinement the least cold proves fatal to them. This gentleman once took half a dozen of these golden wrens at the beginning of winter; they became exceedingly tame, and throve well upon eggs and meat. "At roosting-time," he observes, "there was always a whimsical conflict among them for inside places, as being the warmest, which ended, of course, in the weakest going to the wall. The scene began with a low whistling call among them to roost, and the birds on the extreme right and left flew on the backs of those in the centre, and squeezed themselves into the middle. A fresh couple from the flanks immediately renewed the attack upon the centre, and the conflict continued till the light began to fail them. A severe frost in February killed all but one of them in a night, though in a furnished drawing-room. The survivor was preserved in a little cage by burying it every night under the sofa cushions; but having been one sharp morning, taken from under them before the room was sufficiently warmed by the fire, though perfectly well when removed, it was dead in ten minutes."

White has remarked that the golden-crested wren will stand unconcerned till you come within three or four yards of it. Yet, though not of a mistrustful nature, the little bird is really very timid on the approach of actual danger. If the bough on which it is sitting is struck sharply with a stick, it immediately drops to the ground from terror, and is often taken up dead. Those who require it for a preserved specimen, find this a better mode of taking it than with a gun. In our country the bird is not an article of food, but, small as it is, it is eaten on some part of the Continent; and Montbeillard tells us that the markets of Nuremburg abound with this little gold-crest, great numbers being taken in the environs of the city, by means of the bird-call. They become very tame in confinement, though their small size enables them sometimes to creep through the meshes of a net, and make their escape. Their notes are sweet and pleasing, though not strong. They have little variety, and the strain terminates abruptly. Nor is the nest of this little bird less remarkable for beauty than is the bird itself. This is very large in proportion to its architect, and has very thick walls, composed chiefly of green moss fashioned into a cup-like form, well interlaced with spiders' webs, and covered over at the top, save where one aperture admits the bird. The inside might rather be said to be filled than lined with feathers, so plentifully does the bird place them for the warmth and comfort of her young; and the dwelling is slung, like a hammock, beneath the bough of the yew, or cedar, or larch-tree, or sometimes placed among the ivy. The gold-crest would seem to love well the shadow of green boughs, for it often hangs the nest in such a manner as that a sweeping branch shall fall over it, screening it alike from the hot sun and the eye of the passer-by. The eggs are from seven to ten in number, and of a pale-yellowish brown.

The gold-crest is very generally distributed over the southern counties of England, and is plentiful in Wales. It is also common in the counties on the north of London.

THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.

THE boys of a large school in London had just been dismissed for the day, and, full of glee at their emancipation, they were bounding away through the street to their different homes. Some of the elder ones walked gravely and steadily along, to be sure, conversing on their studies of the morning; but the sun was bright, and the air balmy, and most of the happy youngsters were soon in the fields, displaying their strength and activity.

London then was not what it is now; for it is many, many years ago of which I speak, and meadows then occupied the place on which most of our principal streets now stand. But though the day was so inviting, and the school hours over, yet the rough benches in the school-room were not quite deserted. There still remained three boys, studying. One, certainly, appeared to be thinking of his play more than of the book which he held carelessly in his hand; his merry glance was now through the window, now on his companions, and on hearing the distant shouts of his playmates, he first smiled, then, with a sigh, turning to his book, muttered to himself, "Oh! this tiresome lesson!" His name was Henry Romild.

On the next bench to him was seated a boy of a different character, as might be seen by the steady perseverance with which he again and again perused the task assigned him. He had not so bright and intelligent a

look as Henry had, but he seemed like one who would not be conquered by a few difficulties. His name was Hugh Bardyll.

The third boy was different to both the former. Handsome and intelligent-looking in a high degree, he was pursuing his studies with a fixedness of attention that nothing could distract. A single glance at his countenance showed that he possessed talents of no mean order, while the intensity of application which he evinced as a boy gave promise of no ordinary character. Not once looking up from the book with which he was so deeply engaged, his dark eye occasionally flashed with triumph and delight as he conquered some difficult passage in it. At length, after an hour's hard study, he smiled, and closed his book with a look of satisfaction. "What, are you here still, Hugh and Harry?" he exclaimed, looking round; "I thought I was alone."

"Yes, we are," said Henry, coming forward; "I was obliged to stay and learn this stupid lesson, and I believe Hugh has something to do; but how *you* can stay for a whole hour in this dull room, of your own free will, Thomas, is far more than I can understand. I have been wondering at you for the last half hour; what pleasure *can* you find in poring over those old books?"

"Pleasure!" answered Thomas Becket, for that was the name of the boy who hereafter was to make such a conspicuous figure in English history, though at present only known as the son of an industrious citizen of London; "pleasure! I delight in it, Harry! I have just conquered a passage which has been puzzling me all the week, and which the master himself could not quite understand. Do you think there is no pleasure in that?"

"There certainly is a satisfaction in so doing," said Hugh Bardyll, gravely, as he took his seat near Thomas Becket; "though I confess I do not feel the delight in study which you do. Still I think nothing great can be accomplished without perseverance, and as I hope to be, like my father, a steady, persevering man of business, I was determined not to be daunted by a Latin lesson. He tells me, my character is forming every day, and if I can but resemble him, and make as thriving a business as he has, I shall be content."

"Shall you?" said Becket, with a smile of something like scorn; "I confess *my* ambition soars a little higher than that. I should not like to be kept to my father's trade all my life; no, I love learning, and will distinguish myself. I must be something more than a mere citizen of London, if talents and perseverance will effect it."

"Well; how you two do talk!" exclaimed Harry Romild; "our fathers are all in trade, all good citizens and true. They will all give us something very comfortable to set us up in business, and what more can you wish? For my part, I shall keep my perseverance till I want it, and not waste it over a trumpery lesson. I intend to enjoy myself as long as I can, and not work till I am actually obliged to do so; and I dare say my trade will be quite as prosperous, and my name as high in the city, as either of yours, with all your talents and plodding."

"I don't know that, Harry," said Bardyll; "habit is second nature, and you must imitate your good father's industry, if you would keep up your father's business. By the bye, Thomas, you must inherit your perseverance from your mother; is there not an interesting story told of the way in which she surmounted every obstacle to rejoin your father?"

"There is," replied Becket, proudly; "I will relate it to you. My

father, being with the English army in Palestine, was taken prisoner, and became the slave of a rich Mussulman. This Mussulman had a daughter, who was permitted to converse with the captive, and who first pitied, then loved him. My father returned her affection, and after a time she furnished him with the means of escape. He found it impossible to take her with him, and arrived in England in safety, but alone. When here, his thoughts often wandered to her who had rescued him from a disgraceful captivity, and he wished that he could hear some tidings of her. Months, however, passed away, and no news arrived; when one day he was attracted to the window by an unusual bustle, and hearing the word 'Gilbert!' Gilbert!' pronounced several times. On looking out, he perceived a crowd of people surrounding a female dressed in the Eastern fashion, who, as she walked slowly along the street, incessantly repeated the word 'Gilbert.' He instantly recognised her; it was the Mussulman's daughter; and flying to her, she beheld, with a transport of joy, the Gilbert she sought. You are aware that Gilbert is my father's Christian name, and the only one by which she had known him. When brought to his house, with wondering joy he inquired how she had found her way to England. She said that having contrived to elude the watchful vigilance of her father, she fled, and got on board a vessel sailing for England. The only two English words she knew, were 'London' and 'Gilbert;' by constantly repeating the former, the captain of the vessel understood her wish of being conveyed thither, and to London she came. But when she had arrived, she knew not the name of the street where her lover resided; her only resource was to walk through one after another, pronouncing again and again the word Gilbert. A crowd collected, their curiosity became excited, but to all their questions she had but the one answer, 'Gilbert.' Her constancy and love were at length rewarded, and soon after she became my father's wife."

"She was an example of perseverance, indeed!" exclaimed Hugh Bardyll; "for a young and delicate woman to brave every difficulty and danger, under such circumstances, and to conquer all at last, was very striking!"

"It was," said Thomas Becket, rising; "it showed a mind that was not to be deterred from attaining its object by a few obstacles; and you will see her son follow her example, Bardyll."

The boys then separated.

We will now pass over some years. Hugh Bardyll, steady, diligent, and persevering, had acquired a thorough knowledge of his father's business, and was just returned from France, where he had been sent on matters connected with the trade. His heart was overflowing with happiness, and his face beamed with joy as he entered his home, from which he had now been absent many months.

After the first salutations were over, and he had briefly related to his father the success he had met with in his expedition, his younger brother John exclaimed, "Well, Hugh, what do you think of your old schoolfellow, Thomas Becket? He is made Lord Chancellor of England!"

"Indeed!" answered Hugh, looking quite pleased, "I am glad to hear it; he has been rising from one step to another ever since he left school; I suppose now he is quite a great man?"

"Oh, yes, that he is. Do you know, Hugh, he is such a favourite with King Henry, on account of his learning, that he has appointed him tutor to the young prince, and Warden of the Tower, and I do not know

how many other things. He seems quite familiar and friendly with the king."

"Well, he always said he would be something great," observed Hugh; "is he very rich too?"

"Rich! I should think he was, indeed! Why, they say there never was so much splendour and magnificence seen before. His house is adorned with the richest furniture; gold and silver glitter in all his rooms of state, and no cost is spared at his grand entertainments. Earls and barons daily dine with him, and sometimes even the king himself."

"And he has such a number of servants," observed his sister Matilda; "he never moves without a train of them; his dress is most splendid, and not a day passes but he gives some handsome present of horses, clothes, or money to some one."

"And then his horses' bridles, Hugh, are all of silver," continued John; "and when he travels, he is accompanied by three hundred knights, with eight waggons to attend him, carrying provisions, furniture, and clothes. And more than that, when he crosses the sea he must have six ships to take him and his train over, though King Henry is usually content with one."

"Well, he is a great man, truly," remarked Hugh; "but his abilities gave promise of something. I wish him well with all my heart, but I do not envy him, nor would I change places with him. I would rather be Hugh Bardyll, respectable and respected in my own station of life, with a prosperous trade and a quiet, happy home, than Thomas Becket in all his magnificence." And Hugh looked round on the dear home faces with a smile of true contentment.

"I believe it, son, I believe it!" said old Bardyll, grasping his son's hand, with a look of paternal pride; "and take my word for it, my honest Hugh, you are as happy a man as he is, if not happier. By your perseverance and industry you have made the business more thriving than it ever yet has been; and you are a comfort to your old father, my boy; and there is no small satisfaction in feeling that. I wish I could say the same of your old schoolfellow, Harry Romild; you remember him, Hugh?"

"Certainly; is not Harry going on well?"

"Far from it. He never would apply himself to business, notwithstanding all his father could say, and fell into idle, extravagant habits. At last, the old man, vexed and angry, and tired of speaking to him, declared he would supply him with no more money. Poor Harry! he was always a good-tempered fellow, but very idle and careless, and now he is reaping the reward of those sad habits; he has scarcely a coat to his back."

"Oh, father!" said John, "I heard a story of him the other day which made me laugh. King Henry and Becket were riding together through the street, during that snowy weather, when they met a man so thinly clad that he shivered with cold. King Henry observed, it would be a good deed to give that poor man a warm coat. The Chancellor agreed, and said, 'You do well, Sir, in thinking of so good an action.' 'Then he shall have one directly,' replied the king; and seizing on Becket's cloak, which was of scarlet, lined with ermine, he tried to pull it off. The Chancellor, not liking to part with it, resisted, and a regular scuffle commenced, in which the king and he very nearly pulled each other off their horses. At last Becket gave up the point, and King Henry, taking the cloak, presented it to the astonished man, who was no other than Harry Romild. It was a most amusing scene; and Harry strutted away in the Chancellor's scarlet cloak as proud as any peacock."

"Amusing indeed! and on what intimate terms Becket must be with the king!" observed Hugh. "But I am very sorry for Harry; I will go and see him soon, and try to persuade him to be steady and attentive to business."

Not very long after this conversation, it was announced in London that King Henry had promoted Thomas Becket to be Archbishop of Canterbury. But from that hour the whole of his life and conversation underwent a change. He laid aside all his parade and luxury; he gave no more splendid entertainments; he dressed plainly, and lived abstemiously. His numerous servants were dismissed; his gay amusements given up. Towards the king also his behaviour was quite altered. He was no more his familiar companion, ready to agree to whatever he proposed; but became distant, proud, and unbending. Now that he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, his first thought was to defend the rights of the Church. The king opposed him; but Becket was a bold, ambitious, and clever man, and the contest lasted a long time. You will read an account of it, in English history, when you are older; I will only tell you that they kept each other in a continued state of ferment and irritation for about eight years.

In the meantime, though in a far humbler rank of life than his more ambitious schoolfellow, Hugh Bardyll was happy and contented. He was endeavouring to do his duty in the station in which God had placed him, and whoever aims to do that, enjoys a solid happiness and satisfaction which neither riches nor grandeur can impart. By his attention and skill he had greatly increased his father's trade, and was now married, and settled in a house of his own. His advice and entreaties had been thrown away on Harry Romild, who declared that now he could not settle to business if he wished it; the steady attention necessary was so opposed to all his habits. He could not work, and if his friends did not support him, he must starve.

Hugh was sitting one evening in his little parlour, his wife preparing his supper, his children playing around him, and he himself the picture of happiness, when his father entered, and by his hasty step, and the agitation on his brow, plainly showed that he was the bearer of distressing tidings. It was a minute or two before the old man could speak, but when he had swallowed a cup of wine which Hugh offered him, he recovered a little, and looking on his son with alarm and consternation on his countenance, he gasped, "Oh, Hugh! Hugh! a more terrible murder was never committed!"

"Murder! who, father? Oh! speak; who is murdered?"

"Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the very steps of the altar!"

"The Archbishop!" exclaimed Hugh, turning pale with horror; "who did such a fearful deed? tell me, father, who could do it?"

"Some of the king's own knights, Hugh," replied the old man. "You know that King Henry and Thomas Becket, though once such great friends, have not lately shown much love to each other. The king has been exasperated by the Archbishop's conduct, which has been proud and unyielding, and people say he has treated him at times unjustly, and even severely. Be that as it may, a few days since, King Henry, who is in Normandy, being annoyed and irritated by fresh reports of Becket's proceedings, said, in an unhappy moment, 'Is there no one to rid me of this turbulent priest?' Ah! Hugh, we should be mindful of our words when we feel angry. The poor king little thought to what that hasty speech would lead! Four of his knights, thinking he wished the death of the

Archbishop, started immediately for Canterbury, and proceeded to Becket's house. Finding he refused to comply with their demands to sign some papers, they retired; but afterwards, as he was performing service in the cathedral, they rushed upon him, and savagely murdered him before the altar. Oh! it was a terrible deed!"

"Terrible, indeed!" said Hugh; "it will fill all England with horror; but do you think really, father, that the king had no hand in it?"

"Hugh, I feel sure that he had not. Men may say what they will about it, and much is being said, but the character of Henry the Second stands too high for such an accusation. He spoke rashly, and bitterly has he repented his words; but he never meditated the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury."

"What did he say when he heard of the cruel murder?"

"He was exceedingly shocked and concerned. He shut himself up in his room for three whole days, and neither ate nor drank, refusing to see or to speak to any one. At last the attendants forced open his door, and persuaded him to take some refreshment."

"Well," said Hugh Bardyll, after a pause, "it is a shocking story! a sad close to the high career of my poor schoolfellow; his busy life and ambitious hopes are all over now! I am sure I feel more contented than ever with my own lot in life."

"Is that the end of the story, dear aunt?" said Edward; "thank you, I like it very much. But which of the Henrys did you say was king when Thomas Becket lived?"

"Henry the Second, my dear, the first king of the house of Plantagenet, and grandson of Henry the First, of whom I told you a story a short time since. Now, George, my dear, you see what application and perseverance will do, with or without great abilities; let it be a lesson to you when meeting with difficulties, and do not forget the history of "THE SCHOOLFELLOWS."

ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

MARTYR, MARCH 21, 1555-6.

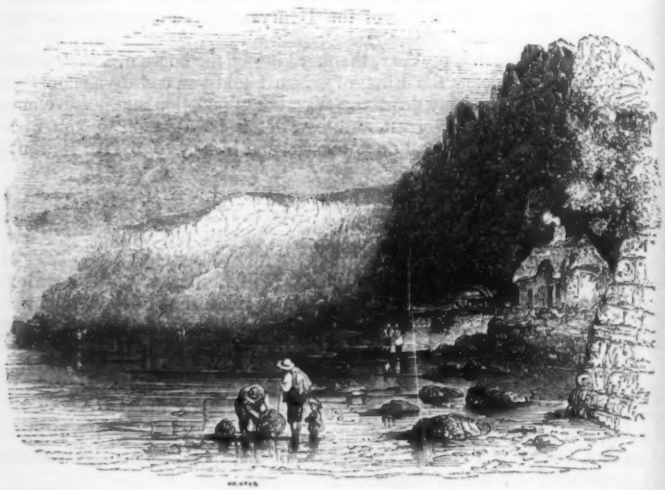
CRANMER, the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, was a zealous promoter of the Reformation, and the most distinguished of those men who laid down their lives in the cause of the reformed religion. The first step which he took to bring about the Reformation, was to procure the Convocation to petition the King that the Bible might be translated into English: when published, and recommended by royal authority, he dispersed it as much as possible. He crowned King Edward the Sixth; caused the Homilies to be composed; and, through his means, the Book of Common Prayer was finished, and settled by Act of Parliament, as were the Articles of the Church of England.

The fatal day (the 21st of March, 1555-6) had now arrived, on which Cranmer was to be committed to the flames. When he came to the place, opposite Balliol College, Oxford, where the holy bishops and martyrs of God, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, had been burnt before him for the confessing of the truth, kneeling down, he prayed to God; and, not long tarrying in his prayers, putting off his garments, he prepared himself to his death. His linen was made long, down to his feet. His feet were bare; likewise his head, when both his caps were off, was so bare, that one hair could not be seen upon it. His beard was long and thick, covering

his face with marvellous gravity. Then was an iron chain tied about him, whom, when they perceived to be more stedfast than that he could be moved from his sentence, they commanded the fire to be set unto him. And when the wood was kindled, and the fire began to burn near him, stretching out his arm, he put into the flame his right hand, with which he had signed his former recantation,* and which he held so steadfast and immovable, saving that once with the same hand he wiped his face, that all men might see his hand burned before his body was touched. His body did so abide the burning of the flame, with such constancy and steadfastness, that, standing always in one place, without moving his body he seemed to move no more than the stake to which he was bound: his eyes were lifted up unto heaven, and oftentimes he repeated, "This unworthy right hand!" so long as his voice would suffer him; and using often the words of St. Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," in the greatness of the flame he gave up the ghost.†

REFLECTION.—We may learn from this example, that in life the fears of death frequently overcome our resolution; but that in the act of death the Christian is strengthened and upheld by Him, who in his own person conquered death.

THE PEBBLE COLLECTOR.



IT was a beautiful afternoon in early autumn; the sun shone brightly on a towering hill upon my right, a little rivulet trickled noiselessly down toward the sea on my left, while the tide in front, rising rapidly, was, as the sea ever is when present, the chief attraction to the eye. A narrow

* Strype informs us that Archbishop Cranmer was subtilely drawn in by the Papists to subscribe, by way of recantation, six different papers; the first being expressed in ambiguous words, capable of a favourable construction. The five following were added as explanations of it.

† Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog., vol. iii.

line of sea-weed marked the boundary which the waves had not yet passed, and children stood on the edge, throwing in pebbles, and laughing at the haste with which now and then a sudden advance of the tide made them retreat backward.

Among the children stood an old gentleman, of perhaps sixty years. His figure was slightly bent, and his hair silvery white; but his cheek was ruddy, and his appearance that of a green old age. As he approached the water, he stooped down to pick up something, which proved to be a pebble; this he carefully deposited in his pocket, and quickly seized a couple more; and thus proceeded. Some that he gathered were pretty white ones; others having nothing attractive either in shape or colour.

By this time he had reached the water-line, where he began to rake with his cane among the sea-weed, and pulled out now a stone, now a fragment of red earthenware, which the action of the waves had gradually worn to the shape of a rounded pebble.

This was not the first occasion on which I had seen him. The childishness of his occupation, and the intent eagerness with which he followed it at all hours, and every day, had attracted my notice before. Sundays and week-days he was still engaged in his indefatigable work of collecting, with this difference, that a wallet of oiled silk which he carried as an accessory pocket in the week, was not borne on the Sunday. Suspecting that the poor gentleman was of unsound mind, curiosity impelled me to ascertain the fact. Accordingly I strolled by his side, and watched for a few moments his proceedings before I addressed him.

"Are you collecting shells, sir?" said I, in as silvery a tone as I could command.

"Yes," he replied, gruffly, and turned away short on his heel. Then in an instant turning again, he said, "Shells! no, stones; such stones as these;" poking out at the same moment, with the end of his walking-stick, a pebble of white quartz as large as a walnut, which, stooping with some difficulty, he picked up and carefully dropped into his pocket, which was evidently half full already.

"And do you collect them as curiosities, or do you make any use of them?" I inquired.

"Oh! use, use, to be sure, I make buttons of them, buttons." Then in a lower, confidential tone, "I've got a machine that cuts 'em into buttons. It cost as much as five or six pounds!"

"Shirt-buttons, or studs?" I asked, but to this he made no reply.

"Have you a large stock of buttons, then?" I continued, after a few moments; he all the while going on with his work as if his life depended on his industry.

"Not here, not here; I have none here."

"Then where do you cut them? where is your machine? in the town here?"

"Oh, no, at my own house."

"And where is your house," I asked.

"Ah!" said he, looking mysterious and sly; "where is my house! Never mind, never mind!"

"Oh, I beg pardon," I said in an apologetic tone; "I thought you might be carrying on business here."

"Business! Oh no! why I've got five-and-twenty pounds a day!"

"That is a large income indeed," said I: "And is there much demand for these buttons?"

"There will be soon. But I make my relations wear them; and they all do it too, all of 'em."

"Is it shirt-buttons you make?" I ventured again to ask.

"Oh! all kinds of buttons;—shirt-buttons, coat-buttons, waistcoat-buttons;—all kinds: I'll show 'em to you one of these days."

But here he changed his manner; turning towards me with the air of one going to impart a valuable secret, he said, "They're transparent; but nobody knows it. Isn't that odd?" Then holding up before me a common white pebble, as opaque as a hen's egg, he mysteriously repeated, "Yes, they're transparent. But is it not strange that nobody knows it?"

It was evident that the intellect of this old man was defective; but his amusements being harmless in their character, he was allowed to follow them without molestation or restraint. Yet not without a watchful, but unobtrusive supervision, for, as I subsequently found, an attendant was always at hand, who had the tact to keep his charge constantly in sight, without allowing the poor gentleman to perceive that there was any check upon his actions.

Whatever of amusement or light thoughts had been suggested by his occupation, had quickly passed away from my mind, and had given place to sober, and I hope profitable, reflections. I looked on the busy seriousness of this aged man, who, perhaps, in time past had enjoyed a vigorous intellect, and many of the pleasures of the world, of business, of family ties, of useful life—I looked forward, and beheld an heir of immortality on the verge of eternity, unconscious, unthinking, perhaps unprepared. I said to myself, "Ought I not to speak a word to him on higher matters than these?" but I felt that his time was gone by for learning the way of salvation; and that his doom was as much fixed as if the grave had already closed over him. All that was left of understanding was not greater than that of the little child of three years old, standing by my side, and engaged in a similar occupation. With the one all that was of the intellect was past, with the other all future. Yet how little does this poor idler differ from most of us! we are on the brink of the great sea of eternity, gathering useless pebbles and bits of glass. It seems not so to us: there appears a value in the gold and silver, the treasure, whether it be of the brain or the purse, which we are accumulating; but do we ever ask ourselves, "Where are we standing? whither are we going? of what value will our treasures be when we arrive at our journey's end?"

Our poor old man had a vast collection of pebbles at home; he thought them very precious. When questioned about them he sometimes said he made clothes of them, sometimes buttons, but always considered them of great value; so we think of much that we accumulate, which will be in the great day only as "wood, hay, stubble," as pebbles and bits of earthenware.

"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Let us take a lesson of them. Let not the lunatic or the idiot be more diligent in his useless work than the child of God, in laying up heavenly treasure.

Let not the man of the world be more earnest in amassing a store of wealth or learning, than we are in making our calling and election sure. And as day after day I see this melancholy wreck of lost intellect, may I be incited to use the light while I have the light, lest darkness come upon me; lest my sun go down, and my time of serving the Lord pass away, even while the poor body still crawls about on the earth. It is a trite

subject to speak of—the uncertainty of death-bed repentance;—but I would recommend any who are trusting to it, to ponder on the many things which make it possible they may never have the opportunity they so confidently anticipate, and among the rest that their reason may fail before the body sinks into decay.

MRS. GIBSON.

It was a just but severe rebuke which fell from the lips of one reverend in wisdom and in years, and addressed to a lady who was notorious for censoriousness: "Madam, you have the curse of all curses in your head—the curse of an evil tongue:" for whether it be considered in its effects upon the happiness of others, or the misery it entails upon its possessor, few propensities are more to be dreaded and avoided than this. Alas for human infirmity! that the taming of the wild beast, the management of the fiery steed, or the guidance of the stately vessel, should be an easier task than the bridling of that member, which, unruly as our sinful nature has made it, is yet the best we have, and was assuredly given us for our own glory and for the praise of God!

On the confines of Devonshire, towards the north, lies one of the prettiest villages that the sun in its wide career smiles upon. Hill and dale, wood and stream, diversify its scenery, and leave little for the admiring eye to desire. Nor are its inhabitants unworthy of the advantages of their situation; less vice and more general rectitude of conduct are not to be found in any hamlet of its size in the kingdom. Yet lovely as it is, and happy and virtuous as are still the race that people it, it once owned a scourge which was felt by all in turn.

That scourge, the dread alike of young and old, was a Mrs. Gibson, the widow of a respectable farmer, who having now little to do herself, made it her business to interest herself in every other person's concerns. No one did right in her eyes; she had "a crow to pluck" in every house: defects that were scarcely visible to others were to her glaring and inexcusable. Notwithstanding that she spared nobody, and prided herself upon her candour, she had yet a cowardly way of attacking a person, that was more provoking than any other she could have adopted. Having dissected, as

it were, in the face of her victim, the character and habits of another, and animadverted upon them according to her own ideas of right and wrong—which, by-the-by, were rather singular—the only answers she would return to the indignant retort she provoked, was a cool—"*I* meant nothing: if the cap fits, pray put it on."

In this way she was feared and disliked by all, and a most unwelcome visitor in any house she thought fit—and she was never ceremonious—to enter. Not far from her own residence lived a young married couple of the name of Shaw; the man was a native of the place, but his wife was a distant connection of his family living in the neighbouring county. She was a well-behaved, modest young woman, extremely neat both in her person and her dwelling, and in no way ambitious of making an appearance above her means. She had a particular dread of Mrs. Gibson; the very shadow of her as she passed her window gave her an uncomfortable sensation. Mrs. Gibson knew she was no favourite, but her visits were not the less frequent either to her or to any one else on that account; if she had been scrupulous on that score, poor woman, she would have seen the inside of very few houses besides her own.

One day Mrs. Gibson set out on a stroll. Wherever she obtruded herself she scattered the baneful effects of her malignant spirit, and left uneasiness behind her. "If ever that woman attempts to come again into my house," exclaimed the last person whom she had attacked as usual, "I will shut the door in her face. If I am doing wrong, let me be told of it openly and kindly, and I will never quarrel with an elder either for the advice or the reproof she may give me; but to come like Mrs. Gibson, pulling one to pieces, talking at one, striving to hurt one's feelings every way, while she pretends to be speaking of somebody a hundred miles off, is more than I can bear. And then the look she puts on when she has provoked one to speak! only let a person once see it, and, be she whom she may, she will never forget it." And the woman who thus spoke was a kind-hearted creature, who would have found a nook in her cottage, full as it was, for any one who had needed it, and who never refused the counsel of a friend. O that such pests of society like Mrs. Gibson would recollect, that if to follow a multitude to do wrong be evil, to cause another to speak "unadvisedly with his lips" is a sin of no small dye.

Gratified, however, at the angry emotions she saw she had raised, she was about to take the turn to her own house, when, recollecting she had seen some one go in to Mrs. Shaw's, whom she did not recognise immediately, she altered her mind, and, to the vexation of Lizzy, as her husband called her, Mrs. Gibson stood in the doorway of her little apartment before she was aware. She almost started when she perceived her, and whether the words she muttered were an invitation to stay, or an excuse for wishing her to depart, neither herself nor any other person probably could have told. Both, however, were equally immaterial to Mrs. Gibson. "O! never mind me," exclaimed she, seating herself and casting a sharp glance at the stranger, whose face was so far turned from her that she could not accurately discern her features. "I can't stay long—I'm not like some people who can find time to spend half the day in another's house."

Conversation would have lagged had it depended for its liveliness on either Mrs. Shaw or her visitor; for the manner of the former was very constrained, and her attention was anxiously directed to the latter, who, in

her turn, accepted of her civilities almost in silence. The appearance of this person very much puzzled Mrs. Gibson; her dress was far more expensive than an acquaintance of Mrs. Shaw's ought to have worn, and yet it was so plain and simple, that she could not suspect the wearer to be "any one very much out of the way." She was provoked too that the stranger took no notice of herself; and she could not but perceive that her presence was considered as an intrusion. With a spirit becoming her, she therefore determined, be the visitor who she might, "to sit her out;" but first, she resolved she would "have a slap at both." For this purpose she began as usual by taking a circuit round their mutual acquaintance, gradually narrowing her path till she touched the limits she desired.

"I have been to our neighbour Pasgrove's this morning," said she, "but I did not find her up as I expected. Ay, bed's a nice place when one's really ill, and not wanted elsewhere; but how people can lie there who have families to attend to, and have no better excuse for the indulgence than a headache, or some such thing, I can't think."

"Did you tell her so?" said Lizzy, with that want of tact which is often caused by uneasy feelings, and a desire to be rid of a present annoyance.

"Tell her so!" repeated Mrs. Gibson, "not I; that's not my way: but I gave her to understand what I meant; and she must be dull indeed if she did not take me." There was a short pause. Mrs. Gibson resumed.

"As I was coming to you I met Tim Hawkins; he was, as usual, full of complaints of bad times, and bad crops, and the rest of it; but I was not going to waste my time with him. 'Neighbour Hawkins,' said I, 'times are not what they use to be when my husband and I were in business, nor are people either; they who put their fingers into every silly flame that's kindled, must expect to burn them.' As he was turning on his heel, for he took it, who should come up but Sally Pierce! 'So you are going to a new situation on Monday,' said I; 'I wish you luck; you have had a good many places lately.' 'But I think I have quite got my health again,' said she. 'All the better,' said I, 'for really girls have such fancies now-a-days, that if they have a little more work than suits them, their thumb aches, and home they go.'"

"O Sally has been very ill," said Lizzy; "poor thing, it grieved me to see her look so pale and thin."

"Let them pity her that like work no better than she does," replied Mrs. Gibson; "for my part I don't pity her, nor any of her sort. I always found stirring about the best cure for my ailments; and so might others if they had the spirit to try it; but no, idleness, pride, and extravagance, they are to be found everywhere. If you go into a house, it may be of a young couple, what do you see? enough to disgust any one who knows what's what. They must have things, to be sure, that their betters hardly knew the use of a few years ago; a blind to their window, of course;—what have people like them to hide from their neighbours?"—and a sneer that poor Lizzy felt in every nerve accompanied her words;—"and a mahogany table instead of a deal one, and a bit of carpet to put their feet upon, and a smart set of tea-things; and blue ware instead of good old-fashioned white plates; and they must treat with new bread and biscuits if a person drops in, and no doubt with wine too, or where would be the use of wine glasses; and then—O! they can't live on what they have—how should they? Let them say what they will, it is pride, pride, and nothing but pride, that is at the bottom of it all. Don't you think it is, Mrs. Shaw?"

She now fixed her keen eye, which had wandered from one article to another as she spoke, full on the face of Lizzy, who, colouring deeply, said—

"It was a pity if such were the case."

"A pity, indeed!" retorted Mrs. Gibson; "a shame you mean; but some folks never put a cap on, let it fit never so well: and some are just the contrary, they will be trying on every one, whether made for them or not." She glanced at the stranger, who, without once replying to anything she said, had continued quietly to partake of the simple refreshment which Lizzy had placed before her, and which from time to time she presented to her. "And dress! it is quite wonderful to see what a pitch it is come to; there's no telling now-a-days who's who; everybody looks alike—it's all pride; and then they must needs go into a neighbour's house, and eat for luncheon, perhaps, what the others were to have had for their dinner."

This time she succeeded in drawing the desired remark. The stranger turned towards her; "I suppose," said she, "you are now alluding to me?"

"O, I never use names," replied Mrs. Gibson; "when the cap fits, I'm not one to prevent it being worn: all I have to say is this; it is wonderful how people can find time to gossip in other persons' houses, or how other people can entertain them there."

Poor Mrs. Shaw looked the very picture of distress. She made a motion to Mrs. Gibson to be quiet, which she would not see; and she cast a beseeching glance towards her visitor, who, returning an encouraging smile to her, with marked severity thus addressed Mrs. Gibson:—

"I quite agree with you," said she, "that it is really wonderful how time can be found for the purposes you mention. There are, however, many idle, many impertinent and curious persons in the world, but there is a character occasionally to be met with, which is not less obnoxious to society than disgraceful to our sex: one who, under a hypocritical regard for what is right, covers a malignant intention, and takes pleasure in the infliction of wounds for which nothing but malice could find a pretence; one against whom every door would be most justly closed, since it is entered only to spread the poison of an envenomed tongue; and upon whom the brand of 'avoidance' may, without any breach of charity, be affixed."

Mrs. Gibson stared at the speaker with unfeigned astonishment.

"'If the cap fits,' to use your own phrase, as fit it must, I beg you to put it on, and to wear it till you have learned a lesson which you may find advantageous to you. My late maid, Mrs. Shaw, is a worthy, exemplary young woman, who happily knows how to combine propriety with economy, and who, in the humility of her heart, seeks for nothing which her former prudence and industry, and a regard to her present position in life, does not sufficiently justify. Your husband was, if I mistake not, long a tenant, as your son at present is, of my brother: you now know who I am; and I trust you will learn in future not only to spare your neighbours, but to be cautious how you attack a stranger, even for your own sake."

CONSCIENCE, OR THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

'Twas in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school:
There were some that ran, and some that leapt,
Like troutlets in a stream.

Away they sped with gamesome minds,
And souls untouched by sin;
To a level mead they came, and there
They drove the wickets in:
Pleasantly shone the setting sun
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran,
Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can:
But the usher sat remote from all,
A melancholy man!

His hat was off, his vest apart,
To catch heaven's blessed breeze;
For a burning thought was in his brow
And his bosom ill at ease,
So he leaned his head on his hands, and read
The book between his knees!

Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er,
Nor ever glanced aside;
For the peace of his soul he read that book
In the golden eventide:
Much study had made him very lean
And pale, and leaden eyed.

At last he shut the ponderous tome;
With a fast and fervent grasp
He strained the dusky covers close,
And fixed the brazen hasp;
"O God, could I so close my mind,
And clasp it with a clasp!"

Then leaping on his feet upright,
Some moody turns he took;
Now up the mead, then down the mead,
And past a shady nook:
And lo! he saw a little boy
That pored upon a book!

"My gentle lad what is't you read—
Romance or fairy fable?
Or is it some historic page,
Of kings and crowns unstable?"
The young boy gave an upward glance
"It is the Death of Abel."

The usher took six hasty strides,
As smit with sudden pain;
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
Then slowly back again,
And down he sat beside the lad,
And talked with him of Cain:

And long since then of bloody men,
Whose deeds tradition saves;
Of lonely folk cut off unseen,
And hid in sudden graves;
Of horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injured men
Shriek upward from the sod—
Ah, how the ghostly hand will point
To show the burial clod;
And unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God;

He told how murderers walked the earth
Beneath the curse of Cain—
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
And flames about their brain:
For blood has left upon their souls
Its everlasting stain!

"And well," quoth he, "I know, for truth,
Their pangs must be extreme—
Wo, wo, unutterable wo—
Who spill life's sacred stream!
For why? Methought last night I wrought
A murder in a dream!

"One that had never done me wrong—
A feeble man and old;
I led him to a lonely field
The moon shone clear and cold:
Now here, I said, this man shall die,
And I will have his gold!

Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
And one with a heavy stone,
One hurried gash with a hasty knife—
And there the deed was done:
There was nothing lying at my foot
But lifeless flesh and bone!

"Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could do me no ill;
And yet I feared all the more,
For lying there so still:
There was a manhood in his look,
That murder could not kill!

"And lo! the universal air
Seemed lit with ghastly flame—
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
Were looking down in blame:
I took the dead man by the hand,
And called upon his name!

"Oh, God! it made me quake to see
Such sense within the slain!
But when I touched the lifeless clay,
The blood gushed out amain,
For every clot, a burning spot
Was scorching in my brain!

(*To be continued.*)